

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSM-03 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01  
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 ORM-02 /089 W  
-----117477 281808Z /46

R 281420Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7458  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
USMISSION SINAI

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, PBOR, IS, US  
SUBJECT: KNESSET DEBATE ON BEGIN'S U.S. VISIT

1. AT THE CONCLUSION OF 8 1/2 HOURS OF DEBATE, THE KNESSET  
YESTERDAY APPROVED PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S REPORT OF HIS  
U.S. VISIT BY A VOTE OF 59 TO 36 WITH 13 ABSTENTIONS  
(THE DMC AND THE ILP'S LONE MK).

2. BEGIN OPENED THE DEBATE WITH A 90-MINUTE PRESENTATION  
WHICH REVIEWED THE RESULTS OF HIS TRIP. AMONG BEGIN'S  
BASIC THEMES: FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE SIX DAY  
WAR THERE IS AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ISRAEL THAT  
THE GOAL OF NEGOTIATIONS IS PEACE TREATIES; ISRAEL'S REJECTION  
OF PLO PARTICIPATION AT A GENEVA CONFERENCE; AND TOTAL  
REJECTION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE. HE DESCRIBED HIS  
SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS WITH CONGRESS AND LEADERS OF THE  
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JEWISH COMMUNITY AND PLACING CARTER IN THE SAME CONTEXT  
AS BEGIN'S "MASTER AND MENTOR," VLADIMIR JABOTINSKY,  
HE WAS EFFUSIVE IN PRAISING THE PRESIDENT.

3. BEGIN DEVOTED MUCH OF HIS SPEECH TO THE SUBJECT  
OF SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND DEFENDED  
THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION OF THE PREVIOUS DAY LEGITIMIZING

THREE SETTLEMENTS. (SEE TEL AVIV 5541 FOR AN EXCERPT OF HIS REMARKS ON THIS SUBJECT.) HE DENIED THAT ESTABLISHING SETTLEMENTS ON THE WEST BANK WAS A VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW SINCE THE AREA WAS NOT OCCUPIED TERRITORY. JORDAN'S ANNEXATION OF THE WEST BANK HAD BEEN RECOGNIZED BY ONLY TWO COUNTRIES AND THEREFORE ITS CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE AREA WAS NOT ACCEPTED BY THE COMMUNITY OF NATIONS.

4. BEGIN'S PRESENTATION WAS RELATIVELY FLAT AND REPETITIOUS OF WHAT ISRAELIS HAD HEARD HIM SAY AT HIS WASHINGTON PRESS CONFERENCE AND HIS ARRIVAL SPEECH ON JULY 25. IN CONTRAST, OPPOSITION LEADER SHIMON PERES DELIVERED A HARD HITTING, INCISIVE ATTACK ON BEGIN'S ROSY PICTURE OF SUCCESS IN WASHINGTON. (IT MARKED THE FIRST WELL-PREPARED AND ORGANIZED OPPOSITION ATTACK ON THE GOVERNMENT SINCE BEGIN TOOK OFFICE.) PERES WARNED THAT, BY AVOIDING THE SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCES WITH THE U.S., THE GOVERNMENT MAY BE SETTING A TRAP FOR ITSELF. HE REMINDED THE PRIME MINISTER THAT CARTER HAD LINKED A PEACE TREATY WITH A "HOMELAND" AND WITHDRAWAL TO VIRTUALLY THE 1967 BORDERS, AND ASKED RHETORICALLY IF THE U.S. CONTINUES TO INSIST ON THESE ELEMENTS, "WILL THE ARABS ACCEPT LESS?" HE CHARGED BEGIN WITH ABANDONING HIS OWN PRINCIPLES, NOTING THAT BEGIN IS READY TO PUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND EVEN JERUSALEM, ON THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. PERES WONDERED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO BEGIN'S VAUNTED FRIENDSHIP WITH CARTER FOLLOWING THE DECISION ON THE THREE SETTLEMENTS. HE ALSO QUESTIONED WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER DID IN FACT REJECT CARTER'S REQUEST TO POSTPONE SETTLEMENTS UNTIL THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. AS FOR THE ALIGNMENT'S POSITION, PERES SAID IT WAS AND WILL BE READY FOR INTERIM AGREEMENTS; "A PARTIAL AGREEMENT IS PREFERABLE TO A TOTAL WAR."

5. SPEAKING AFTER SOME 20 OTHER (MOSTLY OPPOSITION) MK'S, FORMER PRIME MINISTER RABIN ALSO CRITICIZED BEGIN SHARPLY AND WAS EFFECTIVE IN UNDERSCORING PERES' ATTACK. HE CHARGED THAT IT WAS DANGEROUS FOR ISRAEL TO GO TO GENEVA AS LONG AS CARTER DID NOT CHANGE HIS MIND ON "HOMELAND" AND THE EXTENT OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. RABIN MAINTAINED THAT BEGIN'S VISIT HAD WEAKENED ISRAEL'S FRIENDS IN WASHINGTON

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BY SEEMING TO GIVE SANCTION TO DIVIDED OPINION. SINCE  
BEGIN WOULD HAVE IT THAT U.S./ISRAELI DIFFERENCES DID  
NOT HAVE TO BE RESOLVED PRIOR TO GENEVA, ISRAEL'S  
FRIENDS NEED NOT ARGUE ISRAEL'S CASE ON THESE ISSUES.  
RABIN, LIKE SEVERAL OTHERS, CHARGED BEGIN WITH SHOWING  
CONTEMPT FOR THE KNESSET'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY  
COMMITTEE BY NOT REPORTING TO IT BEFORE OR AFTER THE  
U.S. VISIT.

6. IN HIS CONCLUDING REBUTTAL, BEGIN WAS ALSO HARD  
HITTING AND MORE PROVOCATIVE THAN IN HIS OPENING  
ADDRESS. HE CONTENDED THAT IT WAS A MISTAKE TO  
DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PROCEDURES AND SUBSTANCE REGARDING  
A PEACE SETTLEMENT; THE PROCEDURE AND THE  
ARRANGEMENTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE ALSO SUBSTANCE,  
BEGIN CLAIMED. THERE WAS A SHARP EXCHANGE BETWEEN  
BEGIN AND RABIN WHEN BEGIN CHARGED HIS PREDECESSOR WITH HIDING  
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HARSH TRUTHS ABOUT HIS LAST WASHINGTON VISIT, AND  
HE MOCKED THE ALIGNMENT SLOGAN, "A PIECE OF LAND FOR

A PIECE OF PEACE." HE DECLARED "THE U.S. IS FULLY AWARE THAT ITS CALL FOR US TO PULL BACK TO THE 1967 BORDERS WITH ONLY MINOR MODIFICATIONS IS OUT OF THE QUESTION. PERHAPS AN ANNOUNCEMENT IN THIS CONNECTION WILL BE MADE ONE OF THESE DAYS," HE ADDED MYSTERIOUSLY. BEGIN ALSO EXPRESSED DISAPPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED U.S. SALE OF C-130 PLANES TO EGYPT, ADDING IRONICALLY, WITH IMPLIED REFERENCE TO U.S. LANGUAGE CONDEMNING ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS, "EVERY SUPPLY OF WEAPONRY TO A COUNTRY AT WAR WITH ISRAEL PLACES AN OBSTACLE ON THE ROAD TO PEACE."

7. COMMENT: IN TYPICAL BEGIN FASHION, HE WAS BETTER IN HIS REBUTTAL THAN IN HIS INITIAL PRESENTATION. NOTEWORTHY BY ITS ABSENCE FROM BEGIN'S REMARKS WAS ANY REFERENCE TO THE LEAKING OF HIS "PEACE PLAN," REFLECTING, PERHAPS, BEGIN'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT HE HAD OVER-REACTED UPON HIS ARRIVAL (TEL AVIV 5498). LEWIS

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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Review Release Event:** n/a  
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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
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**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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